

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ISLAMA 03232 031310Z
ACTION NEA-10

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AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

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E.O. 11562: N/A
TAGS: PINT, PK
SUBJECT: BHUTTO VERDICT - TELEGRAM CAMPAIGN AGAINST CLEMENCY

REF: A) STATE 080113 (NOTAL), B) STATE 082835

1. DURING COURSE OF A 22 MARCH INTERVIEW BY BRITISH
INDEPENDENT TV (WE ARE NOT SURE THIS SEGMENT SURVIVED THE
EDITORIAL SCISSORS), CHIEF MARTIAL LAW ADMINISTRATOR (CMLA)
GENERAL ZIA UL-HAQ WAS ASKED BY INTERVIEWER WHAT WOULD BE
HIS RECOMMENDATION TO PRESIDENT CHOUDHURY IF SUPREME COURT
UPHOLDS BHUTTO GUILTY VERDICT AND SENTENCE AND BHUTTO
APPEALS FOR EXECUTIVE CLEMENCY. ACCORDING TO INTERVIEWER,
WHO HAS SPOKEN WITH EMBOFF, GEN. ZIA RESPONDED
THAT SINCE HE HAD BECOME CMLA, THE PRESIDENT HAS RECEIVED
BETWEEN 70 AND 90 APPEALS FOR COMMUTATION OF VARIOUS
SENTENCES. NONE HAS BEEN GRANTED, ZIA SAID, ADDIING THAT
IN GENERAL HE DOES NOT SEE ANY REASON WHY THE EXECUTIVE
SHOULD INTERVENE TO OVERTURN A JUDGEMENT REACHED THROUGH
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PAGE 02 ISLAMA 03232 031310Z

A DULY CONSTITUTED JUDICIAL PROCESS. HE THEREFORE WOULD
SEE NO REASON TO COMMUTE BHUTTO'S SENTENCE IF IT IS UPHELD
BY THE SUPREME COURT.

2. ZIA ADDED, IN RESPONSE TO ANOTHER QUESTION, THAT HE
IS NOT DISTURBED BY APPEALS FOR CLEMENCY FOR BHUTTO FROM
ABROAD; THEY ARE "POLITE" AND "CAREFULLY WORDED," HE

SAID, AND CANNOT BE CONSIDERED INTERFERENCE IN PAKISTAN'S INTERNAL AFFAIRS.

3. OTHERS IN PAKISTAN DO NOT TAKE QUITE SO DISPASSIONATE A VIEW ABOUT SUCH APPEALS FROM ABROAD. SINCE THE BHUTTO SENTENCE WAS ANNOUNCED ON 18 MARCH, THE EMBASSY HAS RECEIVED THIRTY-THREE TELEGRAMS FROM PAKISTANIS DENOUNCING FOREIGN "INTERVENTION" IN THE CASE. OF THESE THIRTY-THREE, TEN SEEM TO BE FROM INDIVIDUALS ACTING INDEPENDENTLY. THE OTHERS FALL INTO THREE GROUPS, EXHIBITING WITHIN EACH GROUP REMARKABLY SIMILAR WORDING. THE BASIC TEXTS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

(A) HIGH COURT HAS AWARDED DEATH PENALTY OF ZULFIKAR ALI BHUTTO FOR THE BRUTAL MURDER OF MOHAMMAD AHMED KHAN; THE OFFENSE IF FULLY PROVED AGAINST HIM IS NOT A POLITICAL CASE. HENCE INTERVENTION FROM ANY QUARTER WILL UNDERMINE THE BASIC NOTIONS OF LAW AND JUSTICE.

(B) BHUTTO'S TRIAL WAS FAIR, AND IMPARTIAL VERDICT OF THE HIGH COURT IS ACCORDING TO LAW. ANY ATTEMPT TO INFLUENCE AND SUBVERT THE COURSE OF JUSTICE WILL NOT BE TOLERATED. KINDLY DO NOT INTERFERE IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF PAKISTAN.

(C) HIGH COURT VERDICT AGAINST BHUTTO IS ACCORDING LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 ISLAMA 03232 031310Z

TO NATURAL JUSTICE. IT IS SUBMITTED NOT TO INTERFERE IN OUR NATIONAL INTEREST. INTERFERENCE WILL NOT BE APPRECIATED BY THE PUBLIC.

4. OF THE INDEPENDENT TELEGRAMS, THREE MAKE REFERENCE TO ISLAMIC OR QURANIC LAW, AND ONE INCLUDES A THREAT TO FAST TO DEATH IN FRONT OF JINNAH'S TOMB IN KARACHI IF THIS "ILLEGAL PROPAGANDA" IS NOT STOPPED.

5. A LARGE NUMBER OF THE SIMILAR TELEGRAMS ARE FROM MERCHANTS' ASSOCIATIONS, E.G., THE CLOTH MERCHANTS ASSOCIATION OF MUZAFFARGARH AND THE WATCH TRADERS ASSOCIATION OF MULTAN. THE SIMILARITY IN WORDING LEADS TO THE INEVITABLE CONCLUSION THAT A CAMPAIGN AGAINST COMMUTATION OF THE SENTENCE IS BEING ORCHESTRATED BY A GROUP OR GROUPS UNKNOWN WHO ARE STRONGLY OPPOSED TO BHUTTO.

6. ON 2 APRIL, THE URDU PAPER MUSAWAAT, QUOTING VOA, REPORTED THAT THE UNITED STATES HAD REQUESTED THE GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN TO COMMUTE BHUTTO'S SENTENCE ON HUMANITARIAN GROUNDS. HUMMEL

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